

MOSCOW SAYS U.S. HURTS RELATIONS BY ITS U.N. ORDER

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Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, March 11 — The Soviet Government said today that "direct damage" to relations with the United States could result from the American order that the size of Soviet missions to the United Nations be reduced.

A protest read at the Foreign Ministry to the United States chargé d'affaires, Richard Combs Jr., said:

"Of course, the Soviet side cannot pass such unlawful United States actions over and will have to draw appropriate conclusions."

The protest was distributed by Tass, the Government press agency, and read on the evening television news.

It did not specify what Soviet actions might be contemplated. But it mentioned plans for the next summit meeting, the new agreement to exchange consulates in Kiev and in New York and other joint projects.

Distrust of U.S. Fostered

The Soviet Government said that the American actions "not only cannot be reconciled with assurances by the United States side that it strives toward an improvement of relations, but do direct damage to them."

"The United States Administration must be aware," the statement continued, "that such actions increase distrust of its policy and by no means create a favorable background for a summit meeting."

"Just as it must be also clear that such actions cannot but affect most seriously the development of contacts between our countries in various fields."

"It is hard to reconcile all this with statements by the United States side in favor of implementing accords on the opening of consulates general in New York and in Kiev, on the expansion of contacts and exchanges, including the finding of new forms."

Issue of New York Site Raised

The statement said the American actions also raised the question "whether it is appropriate for United Nations headquarters to be located in a country that does not fulfil its obligations to the organization."

The protest was in response to an American order, announced Friday, that the three Soviet missions to the United Nations reduce their staffs from 275 to 170 over the next two years.

The United States has said that the missions are being used for espionage and that the resources of the Federal Bureau of Investigation are being strained by the need to monitor the movements of so many potential spies. In the Soviet Union, the movements of foreigners are similarly watched by agents of the Government's State Security Committee, the internal security agency.

Under the arrangements that led to the establishment of the United Nations at the end of World War II, the Soviet Union is represented not only by a delegation from its central government, but by delegations from two of its 15 constituent republics, the Ukraine and Byelorussia, on the ground that these states, by virtue of their location on the western borders, suffered particularly from the German invasion during the war.

The Soviet statement today said that the United States' action was "arbitrary and unfounded, and constitutes a flagrant violation" of its obligations as the host country for United Nations headquarters. The statement said that nothing in United Nations rules gave the United States the right to "impose numerical restrictions" on foreign missions to the United Nations.

The statement said the assumption of that right was "totally inadmissible" and "incompatible with international law."

The Government further said that Washington's latest action was part of a pattern that included the American withdrawal from Unesco and earlier restrictions on Soviet and East European nationals employed by the United Nations Secretariat.

In a separate dispatch, the Soviet press agency recalled that the United States had limited the movements of United Nations employees from the Soviet Union, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Iran, Cuba and Libya to a 25-mile radius. As of Jan. 6, the United States also imposed restrictions on the movements of diplomats or staff members from East Germany, Poland, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia.

Responding indirectly to American charges that Soviet representatives stationed in the United States are potential spies, the Soviet press has been turning the charges around by focusing on American intelligence activity.

Several dispatches were critical of Vernon Walters, the American delegate to the United Nations, focusing on his past as a military attaché at United States embassies abroad and, from 1972 to 1976, as deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

An article in Pravda recalled the case of Vitaly S. Yurchenko, the K.G.B. agent who defected to the United States and then returned to the Soviet Union, contending that he had been kidnapped. Pravda said Mr. Yurchenko was preparing an account of his experiences for publication. The reference to Mr. Yurchenko seemed intended in part to respond to rumors that he had been executed.